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THE EFFECTS OF A RE-ENTRY PROGRAM  
ON LOCUS OF CONTROL AND SELF-REGARD

by

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## ABSTRACT

In this study the effects of skills training are examined, and the moderating effects of two individual difference variables -- locus of control and self-esteem -- are investigated. The training program "Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment", or C.O.P.E., which is three months in length, prepares single parent mothers on income assistance for retraining or re-entry into the work place. Thirty-nine participants were pre- and post-tested using Rotter's Locus of Control Scale and Shostrom's Personal Orientation Inventory which contains a "Self-Regard" subscale. The sample included two separate C.O.P.E. classes and two separate control groups, totalling thirty-nine subjects. Interviews were carried out before training to assess the goals of the program for the referral agent, the instructor and the participants, and at the end of training to determine whether participants had career plans, whether they felt successful and to what they attributed success and failure.

Repeated measures analysis of variance was employed to test hypotheses regarding effects of training on locus of control and self-regard. It was found that locus of control improved at a statistically significant level ( $p < .05$ ) for both treatment and

control groups over the time period between the pre- and post-tests. There was no statistically significant difference found in improvement of locus of control between the treatment and control group over the same period. Pre-post changes in measured self-regard were significantly greater ( $p < .05$ ) for the experimental group than for the control group. Additional tests were carried out on this variable. An ANOVA for the self-regard variable indicated that no significant differences existed between the two treatment groups tested or between the treatment groups' measured improvement over time. However, a simple main effects test established an initial difference between treatment and control group means at pre-test time with no difference at post-test time.

Interviews of the women at both pre- and post-test times indicated improved clarity in future plans, verbalized personal success in line with self-esteem changes and attributions for perceived success and failures.

Findings suggest that both self-selection and instructor screening may have affected the analysis and may affect the usefulness of the program for participants.

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction and Background to the Study

Single parent families are a growing class in Canada. Statistics Canada (1976) reports that between 1971 and 1976 there was a 17 per cent increase in single parent families; two parent families increased by only 13 per cent. In British Columbia in 1981 (Statistics Canada, 1984) there were 78,710 single parent families; 82 per cent of these were women. In Canada, 44 per cent of single parent families are living below the poverty line; many on welfare (Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, 1983).

These women are economically disadvantaged and frequently experience role strain (Heatherington, Cox and Cox, 1979), fear of loneliness, loss of self-esteem, practical living problems and concerns with children (Ilgenfritz 1961). Depression is linked to unmarried people with children (Pearlin and Johnson, 1977) and further, depression impairs parental performance (Weissman, Paykel, Siegel and Klerman, 1971; Weissman, Paykel and Klerman, 1972). As well, single parent women described themselves as having little confidence and a lack of education about resources available to them in order to make changes in their lives (Ratcliff, 1984).

### Nature of the Problem

Worell and Garret-Fulks (1983) structure the single mother's problem in terms of her socialization: "Our society has been remiss in providing role models and consequent expectations for the woman alone. Few female children are raised with the notion that they may spend half their lives as single persons..." (p. 201).

Women are not socialized to assume unmarried roles and they are not supported when they become single (Aslin, 1978; Bach, 1974). The role of wife and mother, it is assumed, will supercede all other roles (Lewis, 1978; Bach, 1974) and when women experience the loss of their role as a partner it is often accompanied by a sense of personal failure (Rawlings and Carter, 1979). Many of these women turn to welfare for support because they perceive themselves as lacking skills necessary to support themselves and because they lack the self-confidence or positive self-regard so necessary for successful job hunts and job maintenance.

Ratcliff (1984), in a series of interviews with 32 women on income assistance, indicated that 15 of these women lacked the self-esteem and confidence necessary to make any change in their lives. Lack of information, resources and knowledge was stated 17 times as a reason for not making changes. The other factors reported were lack of experience, money, education and fear of change.

Heatherington, Cox and Cox (1979) indicate that women experience stress following divorce due to the loss of identity

and lack of cross-sex skills. Thus, women experience loss of a familiar set of patterns within a relationship, and they experience incompetence because of low career aspirations, lack of, or inconsistent work experience and incomplete job related skills.

Three traditional female roles discussed within the framework of the Heatherington (1979) study leave single women unprepared for their new position:

1. economic dependence on a male
2. subordination to male power
3. reliance on a husband for social identity (Worell and Garret-Fulks, 1983).

Clara Thompson (1973) indicates economic and personal dependency are culturally based feminine roles within our society.

Often single parent mothers who have left their relationship are left destitute. Forty-one and a half per cent of Canadian single parents derive their major source of income from government transfer payments, usually welfare (National Council of Welfare, 1976). Economic stress of this sort is related significantly to self-reported depression and feelings of incompetence which contribute to a sense of helplessness (Heatherington et al., 1979).

Women have been trained to remain passive and nonassertive in power dealings (Broverman, Broverman, Clarkson, Rosenkrantz, and Vogel, 1972; Branigan and Toler, 1971; Chesler, 1975; Johnson, 1978; Unger, 1978). Without a male partner, a women may feel

unprotected, vulnerable and helpless (Worell and Garret-Fulks, 1983). As well, the female tendency to use indirect power (Unger, 1978) results in a failure of effective influence and feelings of helplessness and despair (Johnson, 1978).

In addition, a woman who has derived her identity, status and social contacts from her relationship with her partner (Aslin, 1978; Bach, 1974; Heatherington et al., 1979) experiences alienation and rejection from others with whom she shared her previous lifestyle (Blechman and Depenbrock, 1974) as cited in Worrell and Garret-Fulks (1983).

Thus, the problem for single parent women is one of both real and perceived economic, social and personal helplessness. Intervention strategies are warranted, given the level of psychological distress and sense of helplessness these women experience. Strategies that increase perception of personal control over events and strategies that increase self-concept are needed for women.

Reilly (1981) for example, has found that disadvantaged women involved in a career/life planning group which emphasized decision-making experienced a significant shift in locus of control toward a more internal direction. Perception of control over events, therefore, is subject to change with specific interventions. Lefcourt (1982) supports this position stating that a shift in locus of control from a more external orientation toward a more internal orientation seems a natural goal for therapy: removing the perception of hopelessness in pursuit of satisfaction.

Further, White (1959) contends that the confidence to influence one's surroundings is directly connected to self-esteem. Increased self-regard, which is indicated by performance, assertiveness and charm, according to White is then a goal for a training intervention. Confidence, then, is self-esteem gained through the perceived ability to control events in one's environment.

It has been demonstrated that passive acceptance of aversive situations (Seligman, 1975) can be changed by effective skills building and therapeutic interventions (de Charms, 1972; Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of a skills building class on the locus of control and self-regard of single parent women who are on income assistance. The following questions are being submitted for study:

1. Do single parent women on income assistance who participate in the "Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment" class exhibit greater gains in locus of control than those in a control group?

2. Do single parent women on income assistance who participate in a the "Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment" class show greater gains in self-regard than those in a control group?

## Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment

### The Program

The C.O.P.E. program is designed for single parent women on income assistance who are between the ages of approximately 17 and 50. The class is held from nine in the morning until two-thirty in the afternoon for a three month period. The program is conducted twice a year. The program has two main areas of focus. The first is improving the self-esteem of participants to a level where perception of personal control and realistic choices for retraining, or re-entry into the workforce is an achievable goal. In an interview with the instructor (Breault, 1984) she indicated that some of the common problems of participants at entry are feelings of isolation, alienation, loneliness, worthlessness and despair; these women often blame themselves for the failure in their marriage or relationships. C.O.P.E. program participants are asked to involve themselves with personal awareness, using group support for activities like communication skills and assertiveness training. Stress reduction is also part of the group experience. Community awareness and specific training skills like resume writing, and information interviews help participants become aware of their career plans in the goal setting and decision-making phase. Active contacts within the community and reporting back to the group help with the decision-making phase.

The second area of focus is improving the self-esteem and



perception of personal control of women through awareness of effective parenting skills. The women participated in parenting exercises as part of the course to improve parenting skills and in an effort to ease the transition from home to work for those women planning retraining or re-entry into the labour force.

In the interview with the instructor of the C.O.P.E. program (Breault, 1984) she stated that her goals for the participants were self-esteem and confidence building, especially in the beginning phases of the program. In the middle and end phases of the program the instructor focused on empowerment and personal control; making choices. These choices involve parenting decisions, decisions about relationships with people and institutions and decisions about the steps after C.O.P.E. The instructor indicated (Breault, 1984) that these women have often gone into relationships early. When their marriages or relationships fail these women see themselves as failures, partly because they have had little opportunity to define themselves outside their relationships or make choices for themselves. Within their relationships these women have often been battered or abused and they leave the relationships believing they are "shits" and "bitches" (Breault, 1984). The single common thread of success with these women has been the experience of birthing.

The goals for the C.O.P.E. class then, according to the instructor, are to give these women the opportunity to experience themselves as valuable human beings; to acknowledge within the group that they are lovable, worthwhile people, to recognize their talents and abilities, to begin to plan, to set goals and

make decisions about themselves based on what they are discovering about themselves and their community.

The referring rehabilitation officer has the same goals; building self-esteem by developing parenting skills, becoming aware of training available to the participants of C.O.P.E., what community resources are available for their training, and clarifying steps toward retraining (Bell, 1984).

### Need for the Study

One of the expected outcomes of the Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment class for disadvantaged women is that the women will perceive that they have choices and a sense of control in their lives and that they are able to set goals for retraining and/or careers which they can reach (Breault, 1984). Also, the course tries to develop feelings of strength and positive self-regard for each woman personally. It is assumed that increased self-regard and increased belief in events occurring contingent on personal behaviour will increase goal striving (Breault, 1984).

Lefcourt (1982) indicates that locus of control may be changed from a more external to a more internal direction as an intervention goal and many studies, the following of which are representative: Smith, 1970; Rielly, 1981; and Levine-Welsh, 1982, indicate that change is possible with specific groups of people and programs. As well, many studies, the following of which are representative: Foulds and Hannigan (1976); and Ware and Barr (1977), indicate that the self-regard of subjects may

change with specific interventions.

Little is known about shifting locus of control and self-esteem of disadvantaged women, and, Mednick (1979) cautions researchers about the "unconscionable gap created by ignoring women outside the white middle-class, college-educated group we know best" (p. 206). As well, research on the variables used to measure change in this study indicated variety of associated effects. First, Lefcourt (1982) states that externality is associated with apathy, withdrawal and helpless feelings, while Hersch and Scheibe (1967) report that internality is associated with dominance, assertiveness, and goal directedness, to mention a few characteristics. Further, Abramson et al. (1978) suggest that attributions toward internality or externality mediate changes in self-esteem. That is, lowered self-esteem and internality are associated with depression. Thus, it appears that a change toward internality alone is not a useful therapeutic goal and that movement toward positive self-regard and internal locus of control is a useful therapeutic intervention.

Research findings indicate a statistically significant relationship generally between self-esteem and internal locus of control (Fitch, 1970; Rychman and Sherman, 1973; Harrison, Guy and Lupfer, 1981), generally, and specifically between the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) and the self-regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1974), (Wareheim and Foulds, 1971).

### Limitations of the Study

1. The research sample used in this study was self-selected. As well, all subjects were screened by the instructor before participation in the C.O.P.E. class and those not invited to participate were advised to take specific action outlined later in this study before re-applying for the second class which was part of this study.
2. Subjects are members of a medium-sized British Columbia city and are experiencing the negative economic effects present within the community at this time. Such a sample (Lefcourt, 1982) may respond differently to the test forms, especially the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) given at different economic times and in different locations. Therefore, generalizability is limited.
3. The instructor is somewhat familiar with both testing instruments used in this study and, although she teaches the concepts involved in the tests, she in no way teaches the items.

### Definition of Terms

Disadvantaged women: Women who rely on welfare as their major source of income are defined as disadvantaged for the purposes of this study.

Skills building class: Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment (C.O.P.E.) is a skills building class. Skills include communication skills, problem-solving skills, workshops specific to each group's needs, parenting, stress reduction, assertiveness, social awareness, career/life planning, resume

writing, career retraining experiences, upgrading and action planning.

Internal-external locus of control: Locus of control is a term used to describe a person's belief regarding the extent to which internal forces or external forces are responsible for behaviour. External locus of control is a person's perception of behaviour as a product of external or environmental contingencies. These contingencies include luck, fate, chance, or powerful others. Also locus of control includes a person's perception of behavior as contingent on internal or personal control. Rotter (1966) contends that people differ in their perception of contingent reinforcement. Some people have more internal perceptions; others more external. The Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) which measures these perceptions is used in this study.

Helplessness: A learned state (Abramson et al., 1978) which provides a model for human depression. The model (Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale, 1978) indicates that lowered self-esteem is a symptom of depression. Other symptoms include motivational, cognitive and affective components (Seligman, 1975) which may be attributed to various causes. These causal attributions (Abramson et al., 1978) are used to explain lack of control and its influence on self-esteem.

Positive self-regard: Liking oneself because of one's strengths (Shostrom, 1974). In the literature, self-esteem and self-regard may be used interchangeably. Self-regard is measured in the Self-Regard subscale of Shostrom's (1974) Personal

Orientation Inventory.

Confidence: For purposes of this study confidence will be defined as esteem established by perception of personal control; having skills and abilities which influence one's environment (White, 1959).

## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of the Literature

Research, theory and topics related to the present study are presented in Chapter Two.

#### Introduction

This study is an investigation of the effectiveness of a program for single parent women on income assistance. The program attempts to improve the confidence level of these women for more effective parenting, for job searching or for retraining. The course instructor teaches communication skills, assertion skills, parenting skills, personal, community and social awareness and job search techniques. When needed, referrals are made for educational upgrading during the program.

Two variables are used in this study to measure change in the women taking the class as compared with women in a control group. They are locus of control (Rotter, 1966) and self-regard (Shostrom, 1963).

The first section of Chapter Two describes the locus of control construct and its usefulness for measuring change -- specifically, change among disadvantaged persons.

The second section of chapter two addresses learned helplessness, a theoretical model which explains the relationship between locus of control and self-esteem. Finally, because

attributional style is a broad concept under which locus of control may be subsumed, attributions are discussed as they relate to locus of control.

The third section of this chapter describes the self-regard variable and its usefulness in measuring change. As well, research using that construct to measure change is reviewed.

The final section includes the research hypotheses.

### Locus of Control

The degree to which an individual perceives that personal control of rewards or events is possible, determines the locus of control for that person. A person who perceives reward as not entirely contingent on behaviour has an external orientation. That person sees luck, chance, powerful others, or simple unpredictability as responsible for an event's occurrence. Thus, that person attributes rewards to external sources (Rotter, 1966) and is less likely to be achievement oriented (Hersch and Scheibe, 1967).

A person who perceives events and rewards as contingent on behaviour has an internal orientation. That person perceives personal attributes as responsible for an event's occurrence (Rotter, 1966) and is more likely to be achievement oriented (Hersch and Scheibe, 1967).

Hersch and Scheibe (1967) compared the scores of people who were more internal on the Locus of Control Scale (1967) with a number of personality traits. Internal subjects tended to be characterized as high on achievement, dominance, endurance,



efficiency, enthusiasm, confidence, and assertion to name some characteristics.

It would appear that internality is highly desirable.

However, Rotter (1966) suggests that:

People at either extreme of the reinforcement dimension are likely to be maladjusted by most definitions, and, to the extent that ego control is another type of definition of maladjustment, it would bear some curvilinear relationship to the variable we are concerned with here (p. 4).

Rotter (1966) then proposes a curvilinear relationship with maladjustment. Those people who have extremely low scores on the scale are as likely to experience adjustment problems as those who have excessively high scores. Therefore, although internality is a desirable goal because of its relationship to certain positively valued personality variables, extreme internality is not useful or healthful.

#### Locus of Control as a Variable to be Changed

Lefcourt (1982) suggests that a shift in locus of control from a more external orientation to a more internal orientation seems a natural goal of therapy; removing the perception of helplessness in pursuit of satisfaction.

Thompson, in a literature review (1981) states that personal control is effective in that it limits the maximum negative experiences and alters people's suffering by changing the meaning of a person's experience. Thus, in general terms, it is useful for the enhancement of one's self-concept to experience a sense

of internal control and attribute personal causation to behaviour.

Smith, (1970) in a study using clients at a crisis intervention center indicated that locus of control scores shifted within six weeks with a treatment of crisis management. Upon entrance, crisis clients scored high ( $\bar{X} = 10.8$ ) (more external) on the locus of control measure (Rotter, 1966). After six weeks these clients scored lower ( $\bar{X} = 7.12$ ; more internal). Non-crisis, psychiatric patients' scores remained fairly stable ( $\bar{X} = 9.63$  and  $\bar{X} = 8.86$ ) for equivalent testing procedures. The crisis clients were described as feeling helpless concerning coping with events at the outset. Several points of interest arise from this study. First, the treatment mean on the I-E scale was initially about "10", more external, and moved to about "7", more internal. Second, treated patients described themselves initially as feeling helpless. This external orientation became more internal as coping skills increased.

#### Social/Economic Status as a Predictor of Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) contends that a person's history of reinforcement determines the degree to which that person differs from others in attributions for reinforcement. Following from this, if a group were socialized towards more external control in terms of power and dominance, as research indicates many women are, (Broverman et al., 1972; Krantzler, 1973; Bach, 1974; Chesler, 1975; Johnson, 1978; Unger, 1978; Rawlings and Carter, 1979), and further, if that group, during a relationship break

up, were economically disadvantaged and dependent on external sources, the people in it may move toward an even more external perception of control of events.

Teski, Arcuri, and Lester (1980) found that women who had never had direct control of their economic situation by working had a more external locus of control than women and men who had that control. Thirty-six women, 65 or older, who had worked until they were 50, were compared with 73 males with the same work and age characteristics. No significant differences existed. However, when 34 housewives who had never worked were compared to the working women, the former group had a significantly stronger external locus of control ( $p < 0.025$ ). Thus, women with a more external locus of control may hold that perception at least in part because economic control from paid work is not part of their experience. It appears that locus of control may be affected by economic factors.

As well, women who have experienced role loss as a partner or wife in a relationship are more likely to shift locus of control to a more external orientation from a more internal one. Doherty (1983) in a longitudinal study confirmed that loss of a partner because of divorce affected perception of control. He found women who divorced had significant shift ( $p = .004$ ) toward a more external orientation than their married counterparts. Thus it may be expected that women who experience the dissolution of a relationship would move toward externality. He suggests that this movement is because of failures for which people felt personally responsible, because of an uncontrollable environment,

or because of changes which involve personal stress, but that successes attributed to personal effort would lead to greater internality with his group sample. Doherty reported that there was an eventual movement back toward internality. It seems highly desirable to be able to work with women who have moved toward externality because of stress, uncontrollable circumstances, or perceived personal responsibilities and single parent women on income assistance may tend toward more external control for such reasons. Thus, a program which addresses these concerns would be useful.

Research indicates social variables are related to locus of control. Stephens and Delys (1973) found that pre-school children from poor homes were more external than middle class children and that children from homes assessed below the poverty line were more external than children from homes above the poverty line.

To support the hypothesis that there was a link between deprivation, denigration and control, Lefcourt and Ladwig (1965) studied sixty black and sixty white prison inmates. Using the Internal-External Control of Reinforcement Scale (Rotter, 1966), they found a significantly higher external orientation among blacks. With socio-economic class and history controlled, Lefcourt suggests that these findings indicate a denigrated class tends toward externality. In 1979, Duke and Lewis found older blacks became more external but whites showed a decrease in externality with age. In 1968, Jessor, Graves, Hanson and Jessor designed a study using 221 community members. Using eight criteria such as occupation, age, and language spoken at home,

investigators found a relationship between internality and ethnic background. However, investigators also found a link between acknowledgement of opportunity and control over fate. Thus, access to opportunity varies directly with locus of control and that ability through position within a larger group membership affects an individual's perception of control. So, if an individual perceives a relationship between opportunity and personal action and is in a position to take that opportunity, that person is likely to be more internal and experience control over events. That person will be more achievement oriented (Hersch and Scheibe, 1967).

However, it appears that membership in a group which is denigrated supports expression of external control. Gurin and Gurin (1970) suggest that to belong to an economically deprived and socially denigrated minority creates an experience of difficulties and of character assaults affecting one's sense of dignity so that self-blame does not seem sensible.

Seligman (1975) states:

The welfare system, however well intended, adds to the uncontrollability engendered by poverty. It is an institution that undermines the dignity of its recipients because their actions do not produce their source of livelihood. (p. 161)

Duncan, in a ten year study on poverty (1984) (cited in Travis, 1984) has indicated that most welfare recipients were so for only a few years. Of the twenty per cent who were chronically poor, one third were elderly and the rest were unmarried mothers who did not have jobs or child care

opportunities (p. 88).

It seems that people, such as blacks or welfare mothers, who are socially denigrated, externally dependent and economically disadvantaged will have lower self-esteem and will tend to be more externally oriented; they will tend to perceive control outside themselves. Further, that perception may be accurate. Control, for welfare mothers, at least economic control, is governmental.

### Learned Helplessness: Development and Connection with Locus of Control

Although helplessness (Seligman, 1975) is not a construct directly used in this study, its formulation is helpful to explain and understand locus of control theory, its development and the relationship of some people and groups of people within society in which goal directed behaviour is reduced.

Seligman's (1975) initial studies were with nonhumans. Dogs who were given an inescapable shock prior to placement in a shuttle box tried to escape shock within the box but gave up quickly, lay in the corner and whined. Previously unshocked or naive dogs learned to get past a barrier and escape the shock. Further, Seligman became aware that dogs with a history of negative environmental stimulation gave up quickly in the shuttle box even if they were naive in terms of initial uncontrollable shock.

Seligman termed this phenomenon "learned helplessness" and described it as a passive acceptance of reinforcements that are

perceived as uncontrollable. The expectation that a response is independent of an outcome decreases motivation to respond, increases fear and possibly depression, and interferes with future learning.

Hiroto (1974) applied this information to a learned helplessness study with humans. Using internally and externally controlled subjects and "skill" and "chance" instructions, Hiroto divided 96 subjects into three groups. One group received training to turn off a loud noise, one group received noise but not training, and a third group received no noise and no training. External subjects became more helpless in that they were more likely to passively accept a loud noise. As well, the experience of uncontrollability -- noise but no training and the chance instructions -- had significant negative effects on the motivation to escape.

Abramson, Seligman and Teasdale (1978) contended that the original model (Seligman, 1975) left unexplained a number of events occurring in learned helplessness studies. The reformulated model they presented (Abramson et al., 1978) has several points which are salient to the present study. First, the model introduces specific attributions which a person makes about noncontingency. Second, the model indicates when self-esteem is affected.

Briefly, the reformulated model indicates that in situations of failure, external attributions (or attributing failure to external factors) maintains self-esteem but internal attributions (or attributing failure to internal factors) diminishes

self-esteem. As with Doherty's (1983) divorced women who experienced failure in a relationship, single parent mothers are in a situation in which there is very likely a shift toward more external locus of control in order to protect vulnerable self-esteem. Thus, a skills building class which promoted self-valuing, and encouraged skills training and choice making toward goal directed activities would be useful for single parent mothers in a socially denigrated position and an externally controlled economic environment.

The model further indicates that internal attribution has more than one dimension. Stable, internal attributions like ability, when used to explain failure, are not as useful as unstable, internal attributions such as effort: effort can change; ability cannot. As well, global, stable and internal attributions for failure such as ability are not as useful when considering future change. Global, stable, and internal attributions increase the expectancy by the person of future failure.

Internal, stable and global attributions are most useful for maintaining success expectancies whereas external, unstable and specific attributions are most useful for eliminating failure expectancies.

Carol Dweck (1975) demonstrated the importance of causal reattribution with children. She gave one group of children success experiences and another group she taught to attribute failure to lack of effort. These children were students who remained passive when presented with challenges they were capable



of achieving. After reattribution training, the children maintained or improved performance following failure experiences and verbalized that insufficient effort, not inability, was responsible for failure. The success experience group deteriorated in performance. Of interest in this study is the use of attributions for skill training. According to learned helplessness theory, if an individual attributes failure to factors such as ability, that person will have lower self-regard; if that person attributes failure to the economic situation, or socialization, or effort, the individual is more likely to maintain self-regard. The C.O.P.E. program uses a feminist perspective to indicate that socialization and other circumstances are often responsible for these women's situations and that with specific skills, their situations can change.

### Attributional Analysis

Weiner and Litman-Adizes (1980) concurs with the learned helplessness approach. They state that ability, effort, task difficulty and luck are attributions for achievement related events within our culture and that ability and effort are the most common causes attributed to success and failure. Task difficulty and luck are seen as other causes. Further, these attributions affect the expectancy of goal attainment. Failure ascribed to low ability or task difficulty decreases the expectancy for goal attainment more than failure ascribed to luck or effort (Weiner et al, 1980).

Unfortunately, women have shown a pattern for low

expectations and external attribution for success, except with interpersonal skills. Gurin and Pruitt (as cited in Mednick, 1979) have found that women have much lower expectancies in job situations than men do. Also, these expectancies are related to non-functional job seeking behaviour.

Mednick (1979) states:

Successful attribution to external factor, such as "a lucky break" or "help from others", or to an internal but unstable factor such as effort, are not likely to lead to increased expectancy levels or to its functional achievement behavior (p. 197).

Thus single parent women on income assistance who have an external orientation or an unstable internal orientation for success are not likely to expect to have consistent future success. It appears that skills building is a useful technique to change realistic perception of goal attainment and that perception of the source of skill attainment will affect locus of control and improve self-regard. The C.O.P.E. program attempts to increase skilled behaviour for job searching.

Wong and Sproule (1984) have yet another perspective on attributional research. They suggest that external attributions may be due to realism. As Gurin, Gurin, Lao and Beattie (1969) have suggested, "...external alternatives are chosen primarily because of reality considerations ..." (p. 319), or Doherty (1980), suggests that women move toward more external orientations during relationship breakup.

Wong and Sproule further suggest that some people co-vary in their perception of control; that is, they see an

interrelationship between environmental and personal influences, and "invoke a multiple causal schema" (p. 327). Bilocals, as Wong and Sproule (1984) define them, are moderate scorers on the locus of control dimension and are characterized by complex causal attributions.

Using Weiner, Frieze, Kukla, Reed, Rest and Rosenbaums's (1971) causal attributions, the Trent Attributional Profile was developed to study the more complex attributional style of bilocals (Wong and Sproule, 1984). Sample questions include statements like:

"When I did not do well in a class in school, it was because:

- |    |                                 |   |   |   |   |   |
|----|---------------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | I didn't try hard enough.       | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| b. | the teacher was very demanding. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| c. | of my lack of skills in the     |   |   |   |   |   |
|    | subject area.                   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| d. | of unlucky breaks.              | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

"1" is not important, "5" is very important."

Unfortunately, research using analyses of more complex attributional styles (Wong and Sproule, 1984) is inconclusive.

Thus learned helplessness and attributional analysis explain possible responses to contingency and noncontingency of perception of control. Internality has the added dimensions of effort and ability, for example, externality, luck or significant others to cite some examples.

### Skills Useful to Increase Perception of Control

Several kinds of skills are thought to increase the

perception of control and are used as part of the C.O.P.E. program. These include assertiveness training, cognitive restructuring, communication skills, and career/life planning.

One intervention, i.e., specific training in communication skills and helping techniques, has been shown to facilitate movement toward internality (Gottesfeld and Dozier, 1966; and Martin and Shepel, 1974).

In a more recent study communication skills were also used successfully as indicated by movement toward internality. Levine-Welsh (1981) found a significant movement ( $p < .05$ ) toward internal control for adult women involved in both assertiveness training and assertiveness plus rational-emotive training. Fifty women in four groups, three experimental and one control, were included in the study. The three treatment groups which included assertiveness, rational emotive therapy and a combination of techniques lasted five consecutive weeks with three-hour sessions once a week. One way analysis of variance verified that there were no significant differences in the experimental groups on pre-test scores. Repeated measures of ANOVA were conducted for all treatments across all times: pre-, post- and five week follow-up. A significant movement towards an internal locus of control was found for pre-, post- and follow-up tests when the three treatments were assessed without the control group and with the control group. This research demonstrated the successful use of specific skills training.

Finally, Reilly (1981) found a significant movement ( $p < .03$ ) toward internal locus of control using pre- and post-test means

of a locus of control instrument as compared to non-significant control group means in a post-hoc analysis of 29 disadvantaged women involved in a career/life planning treatment emphasizing decision-making and goal-setting. The C.O.P.E. program implements these strategies and may expect movement in both self-regard and locus of control.

Thus, the literature indicates significant results for specific types of treatment. These include strength building, decision-making, goal-setting, communication skills and assertiveness/rational-emotive training. As well, striving for goals was improved with specific attribution training.

Other studies using concepts similar to locus of control have dealt more directly with specific intervention outcomes. The C.O.P.E. program focuses on self-esteem building, decision-making, goal-setting, and action-planning. De Charms (1972) uses a construct which measures these skills: personal causation. When a person intends to initiate a behaviour and produces change in the environment, the person's experience is seen as intrinsically motivated; she is the originator of behaviour. The opposite of this concept is expressed as extrinsically motivated behaviour in which a person is externally impelled toward behaviour; the person is the pawn. De Charms (1972) trained teachers to help students (a) determine realistic goals, (b) know their strengths, (c) determine concrete action to reach goals, and (d) decide whether they were having the desired effect on goal striving. Whenever origin training was offered to children, scores increased significantly. Because the C.O.P.E. program

uses skills such as these, movement toward internality may, therefore, be expected for women in the C.O.P.E. class.

### Self-Regard: Definition and Theoretical Basis

Maslow (1968), on whose theories the Personal Orientation Inventory is in part based, describes a needs theory which is structured hierarchically. Lower order needs include survival and security needs. Above these needs are belonging and esteem needs. Finally, if esteem needs are met, a person may strive toward meeting his or her potential; fulfilling actualizing needs. With the women in the program being studied, a common complaint on entry is loneliness and isolation (Ratcliff, 1984), as well as lack of esteem. It would appear that these re-entry women want to have belonging needs met as well as needing to have higher order needs met. Once the belonging needs are satisfied, esteem and actualizing needs may become a focus.

These women, with the aid of transfer payments, have survival needs held constant and, to some extent, have security needs satisfied. But all women are considering re-entry; a shift toward independence and self-control from a situation of economic dependence. This considered change leads to a fear of the unknown (Ratcliff, 1984) and a "needs shift" toward more security (Borgen and Amundson, 1984) may occur. With group support for goal-setting, decision-making, and practical experience maintained within the working community, the fear may be reduced, belonging needs may be established, and the women are free to develop esteem needs so necessary for successful retraining or

job hunting.

Positive self-regard as measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1974) is defined as liking oneself because of one's strengths. One of the major goals of the program under review is to improve individual self-esteem in order to deal more effectively with the environment (Breault, 1984).

Shaver and Robinson (1978) indicate that the Self-Regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory is a typical measure of self-esteem. The Self-Acceptance scale, should be used in conjunction with the Self-Regard subscale (Shostrom, 1974). Shaver and Robinson, however, describe this as less related to self-esteem and, therefore, not useful as part of a self-esteem measure.

#### Locus of Control and Self-Regard

Fitch (1970), using a measure of self-concept, found subjects low in self-esteem were more external on the locus of control scale (Rotter, 1966). Other studies (Janis and Field, 1959 and Ryckman and Sherman, 1973) support this finding. Abramson et al. (1978) hypothesized that internal locus of control and low self-regard interact in some cases. Other studies indicate a correlation between internal locus of control and positive self-regard for well adjusted people.

Other researchers have reported a relationship between positive self-regard as measured by the POI and Rotter's I-E scale. Wareheim and Foulds (1971) reported a significant relationship between internal locus of control and personal

adjustment confirming Rotter's (1966) prediction. Wall (1970) also found a relationship between POI self-regard ( $p < .01$ ) and Rotter's Internality (Rotter, 1966). Thus, there appears to be independent confirmation of the relationship between internal locus of control and positive self-regard, in studies where these two instruments are utilized.

### Self-Regard as a Variable to be Changed

Several studies have demonstrated movement on scales of the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1974) and on the self-regard scale specifically, following therapeutic intervention. Two studies are representative. Foulds and Hannigan (1976) used 72 college students who volunteered for a 24 hour Gestalt workshop. The mean age for the group was 20.1 years. Subjects were randomly assigned by sex into experimental and control groups. The treatment group was then further divided into two groups of nine male and nine females each. The groups were run by two licensed doctoral level Gestalt practitioners. Pre- and post-tests were administered and follow-up tests were completed by all subjects six months later. Results indicated significant difference ( $p < .001$ ) for self-regard at post-test time and ( $p < .05$ ) at a six month follow-up.

Ware and Barr (1977) used the Personal Orientation Inventory and three other tests to measure the change following a nine week group experience. Thirty-nine subjects were randomly assigned to three different groups, one of which was non-participating. A design was implemented which used a structured, an unstructured



and a control group. Half of the group members received a pre-test, and all of the group members were post-tested. Content for the structured group consisted of goal-setting and success analysis, strength analysis, value clarification, time analysis and conflict resolution. Significant results were found for both structured and unstructured groups: ( $F = 4.341$ ;  $p = .021$ ) for the self-regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory at post-treatment time.

Thus, research indicates that the self-regard subscale is a useful variable to measure change in therapeutic interventions and in more structured training situations.

### Summary

Learned helplessness theory indicates that self-esteem is negatively affected in failure situations where control is personally attributed. That is, a person with an internal perception of control in a failure situation will feel less self-worth. In fact, single parent women, on welfare, experience personal failure in relationships that dissolve and also experience lack of confidence and isolation. This sense of personal failure promotes movement (Doherty, 1983) toward a more external perspective in order to maintain already vulnerable feelings of self-esteem which are negatively affected by an internal perception of control (Abramson et al., 1978). However, because a belief in internal control of events is generally a more useful one and because increased self-regard is more useful than less self-regard, a program that changes womens' perception

of control and their feelings of self-regard is a useful therapeutic goal.

In conclusion, although locus of control, as measured by Rotter (1966), is a stable personality characteristic (Rotter, 1966; Lecourt, 1982), certain factors promote movement toward externality or internality (Rotter, 1966; Seligman, 1975; Abramson et al., 1978; Lefcourt, 1982; Doherty, 1983), and self-esteem is often affected by these factors (Abramson et al., 1978). Thus it is useful to study both locus of control and self-esteem in women in a program that promotes confidence building for use in re-entry or training for the work force.

#### Hypotheses Derived from the Literature Review

The literature reviewed indicates that the following hypotheses are suitable for examination of the problem outlined in Chapter One. The hypotheses are stated in both alternative and null forms.

Smith (1970), Levine-Welsh (1982), and Reilly (1981) indicate that a program designed to increase specific skills will change perception of control toward a more internal direction.

H<sub>1</sub> As a result of participation in C.O.P.E., women will become more internal in their locus of control, as measured by Rotter's Internal External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) when compared to a control group.

Foulds and Hannigan (1976), and Ware and Barr (1977) indicate that therapeutic/training interventions will create a positive shift in self-regard.

H<sub>2</sub> As a result of participation in C.O.P.E., women will have a greater degree of self-regard as measured by the Self-Regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1963) when compared to a control group.

## CHAPTER THREE

### Methodology

The purpose of this research is to investigate the effects of treatment on the locus of control and the self-regard of single parent women on income assistance. The women in this project applied to take a program entitled "Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment", or C.O.P.E. After an interview, the women were referred into the C.O.P.E. class, onto a wait list or into a specific intervention situation as suggested by the instructor. Two groups, a control group made up of women not taking C.O.P.E. and a treatment group were part of a pre-test and post-test design. This process was repeated with a new group five months after the first class ended.

The C.O.P.E. class included confidence building and self-awareness skills together with career search techniques and brief on-the-job placements. Its focus was on women wishing re-entry into the work force or into retraining. The class was jointly funded by the Ministry of Human Resources and Ministry of Education.

The treatment group taking C.O.P.E. met for three months. Before the group began the women were pre-tested by the researcher. During the first two weeks the women were interviewed by the researcher. The control group was tested but not interviewed.

This chapter includes information specified under the following headings: population, interview process, groups, procedure, instruments and interview schedule; and analysis.

### Sample

Forty-one women took part in a class offered at a B.C. Community College, although two women did not write the post-tests. The women were all single parent mothers on income assistance. These women were referred by their rehabilitation officer at the Ministry of Human Resources to the C.O.P.E. program. As part of the screening process, each woman was required to call the local college and request an interview with the instructor of the program. This process eliminated referrals. At this point the instructor screened each client for admission into the C.O.P.E. class. Shostrom (1976) recommends these procedures to ensure that potential participants are indeed suitable for a group and to ensure that coercion to become a participant is avoided. However, these procedures limit generalizability of the study somewhat, because of self-selection bias.

### The Interview Process

During an initial interview, the instructor, on the basis of information provided by potential participants, advised active alcoholics to attend treatment before acceptance into C.O.P.E. She also requested mothers under 19 wait for a special C.O.P.E. class, usually offered once a year. In addition the instructor

advised clients who wanted only career counselling to consult with the local college counselling center. Finally, any woman who was overwhelmed by circumstances to the point that she did not have free time and attention for the three month course was referred to situations which met her specific needs before she took the C.O.P.E. class.

### Procedure

Initial testing with Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control and Shostrom's (1974) Personal Orientation Inventory occurred as part of a pre-class appointment the week before the class began. Before each women was tested, she was interviewed and assigned without her awareness to a treatment or control group. Within two days the group members were told of their assignment and control group members were advised to go into upgrading or to specific outside intervention until the next C.O.P.E. class. This process was completed by the instructor with no awareness of pre-test results. The control group was excused except for post-testing, with the promise of group treatment in the Spring of 1985. The treatment group was interviewed in the first two weeks of the class to determine goals for C.O.P.E. Three months later, during the last week of class, participants were interviewed by the researcher to determine whether initial goal statements were met. This process was used to determine whether participants had developed a plan for retraining, re-education or re-entry into the work force, and to determine the success and failure attributions of participants. Also, the instructor and a

spokesperson from the referring source at the Ministry of Human Resources were interviewed to determine what the goals were for C.O.P.E. participants. The treatment and control groups were tested during the last week of class. This procedure was repeated with a second control and treatment group in April, 1985. The first control group was contacted to be part of the treatment group of the second C.O.P.E. class. Two women agreed. These two women met criteria for outside referral before choosing to take the second C.O.P.E. program which was part of this research. One woman was referred for alcohol treatment group. Another woman interviewed for the first treatment group was first part of a support group designed to deal with a specific problem before becoming one of the second group of C.O.P.E. students. The others were referred on a first come, first served basis from the Ministry of Human Resources.

### Groups

Because these women were self-selected and screened as described above, they could not be considered a random sample. However, the groups were similar: The results are indicated in the following table:

Table 1  
Summary of Group Characteristics

	Treatment	Control
Age		
Range	22-41	18-49
Mean	30.31	29.84
Time on Income Assistance		
Range	4mos-9yrs	9mos-7yrs
Mean	1.77	2.25
Number of Children		
Range	1-4	1-4
Mean	1.79	1.63
Education in Grades		
Range	8-12	6-12
Mean	9.94	10.57

#### Program

Career Opportunities in Preparation for Employment or C.O.P.E. is a program offered in a B.C. Community College. The class runs for 12 weeks from 9:00 to 2:30 five days a week and includes on-the-job field placements.

The class has three sections. The first phase involves communication skills, assertiveness training, relaxation, time management and other techniques to engender greater self-awareness and self-esteem. Parenting skills, and community awareness activities are included as are specific speakers that the women are interested in and request. The second phase promotes and encourages goal-setting. The main activities used during this time are active community experience with careers of



interest to participants. This experience is enhanced by Canada Employment counsellors, college counsellors and each woman's rehabilitation officer from the Ministry of Human Resources. Career plans are clarified and confirmed within the realistic limits available and upgrading and resume writing begins. Also, field placements occur at this time. In the final phase, an action plan is completed and supports are built in for leave taking. A program outline is included as Appendix A.

### Instruments and Interview Schedule

#### Locus of Control

Rotter (1966) developed a 29 item, forced choice, paper and pencil questionnaire with six 'filler' items. Several items are presented here as typical of the test items:

- " 9. a. I have often found that what is going to happen will happen.
- b. Trusting to fate has never turned out as well for me as making a decision to take a definite course of action.
- 13. a. When I plan plans, I am almost certain that I can make them work.
- b. It is not always wise to plan too far ahead because many things turn out to be a matter of good or bad fortune anyhow.
- 25. a. Many times I felt that I have little influence over things that happen to me.
- b. It is impossible for me to believe that chance or luck plays an important role in my life." (Rotter, 1966).

A total score is obtained by summing the external beliefs endorsed. The sample Rotter used for inter-item correlation was 200 male and 200 female Ohio State University elementary

psychology students. For this group an internal consistency analysis (Kuder-Richarson) yielded  $r = .70$  for males and  $r = .70$  for females. Test-retest reliability coefficients after one month were: females  $r = .83$  ( $N = 30$ ); males  $r = .60$  ( $N = 30$ ); combined  $r = .72$  ( $N = 60$ ). After two months the reliability coefficients were: males  $r = .49$  ( $N = 63$ ); females  $r = .61$  ( $N = 54$ ); combined  $r = .55$  ( $N = 117$ ). Rotter (1966) suggests that the decrease after two months were in part due to differences in administration (group vs. individual). For other group correlations see Rotter (1966) and Lefcourt (1982).

Correlations with the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale range from  $-.07$  to  $-.35$ . Other factor analysis by Rotter (1966) support the assumption of unidimensionality of the I-E scale and many laboratory and survey studies support the construct validity; however, contradictory results have been obtained by Gurin et al. (1969), regarding correlation with the Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale. Robinson and Shaver (1978) suggest that the Gurin et al. (1969) analysis included items not found in the Rotter scale, thus raising more methodological questions than answering them.

Correlations with intelligence are low and essentially non-significant, ranging from  $.03$  to  $-.22$  (Rotter, 1966).

### Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)

Self-regard was measured by the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom 1963). This test includes two-choice items in a 152 paper-and-pencil administration that can be taken in as

little as 20 minutes. The items are scored twice, once for the two basic scales of personal orientation, inner-directed support (127 items) and time-competence (23 items) and second for ten subscales of which self-regard is one. Several items of the self-regard subscale are presented:

- " 7. a. I sometimes feel embarrassed by compliments.  
b. I am not embarrassed by compliments.
- 68. a. I feel free to be myself and bear the consequences.  
b. I do not feel free to be myself and bear the consequences.
- 78. a. Self-interest is natural.  
b. Self-interest is unnatural.
- 118. a. I am assertive and affirming.  
b. I am not assertive and affirming." (Shostrom, 1963).

Test-retest reliability coefficients obtained from a sample of 48 undergraduate college students for self-regard were .71 (Klavetter and Mogar, 1967). The test was administered twice, with a one-week separation. Stability of scores on the POI was assessed over a one-year period for 46 student nurses, with a coefficient of .66 ( $p < .005$ ) for self-regard (Ilardi and May, 1968). This is within the range of comparable test-retest studies with inventories such as the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory and Edwards Personal Preference Scale. Validity has been established by clearly differentiating between clinically judged self-actualizing and non-self-actualizing groups on 11 of the 12 scales. Self-regard was significant at the .01 confidence level in such a (Shostrom, 1974). Also, 37 new therapy patients and 39 advanced therapy patients were clearly differentiated ( $\chi^2 = .01$ ) on the self-regard subscale.

The M.M.P.I., when administered to this same group, yielded significant differentiation at the .01 confidence level on four scales: depression, psychopathic deviate, psychasthenia, and schizophrenia. Many other indications of test validity are available (Shostrom, 1974).

### Interview Schedule

An initial interview of each woman in the C.O.P.E. program was completed in the first two weeks of each class. In the final week of each class the women were interviewed again. The purpose of the interviews was to add descriptive data to the information collected. Each woman was asked what her goals and plans were for herself in terms of work and in terms of expectations in the C.O.P.E. class. Each woman was also asked to recount her successful and unsuccessful experiences. Each woman was then asked to describe her feelings about herself and to give reasons for predicted successes and failures as the class began. At the end of the class, each person was asked what her plans were and to give reasons for successes or failures at C.O.P.E.

In addition to the women experiencing the program, the instructor for the program and the rehabilitation officer advising women about the program were asked to identify their goals for the women in C.O.P.E. The results of the interviews will be discussed in the following chapters. The interview schedules are provided in Appendix B.

### Data Analysis

Measures of self-regard were subjects' scores on the POI. Measures of locus of control were subjects' scores on the Rotter's I-E scale.

An analysis of variance was carried out on both the self-regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1963) and the Rotter's locus of control scale (Rotter, 1966). All groups were compared for differences, pre- and post-tests were tested for significant changes and pre- and post-tests of treatment subjects were compared with the pre- and post-tests of the control subjects.

A confidence level of  $\alpha = .05$  was selected for acceptance or rejection of null hypotheses.

The interview results were summarized.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

In this chapter the research design is summarized, subject characteristics are reported and a statistical analysis of the data using repeated measures ANOVA is described. As well, the correlation between dependent variables is discussed. Finally, the interview material is summarized and described.

#### Summary of Research Design

All treatment and control subjects were administered pre-tests the week preceeding the treatment. Post-tests were given during the last week of classes for the treatment group and within two weeks of that time for the control group. This procedure was repeated with a new set of groups, three months after the first groups were completed.

Reported locus of control, a dependent variable, was measured by The Rotter Internal-External Scale. Reported self-esteem, a dependent variable, was measured by the Self-Regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory. Repeated measures of ANOVA were computed for these inventories to determine if there were significant differences between group means across time when a treatment group was compared with a control group.

### Subject Characteristics

Thirty-nine subjects completed this study. Two subjects dropped out of the control group. One subject, therefore, was randomly removed from the treatment in order to have equal groups. The subjects in this study are from combined groups of Spring and Fall classes as well as control groups tested at the time of treatment pre- and post-testing. Table 2 shows summaries of demographic information and t-tests which compare the means of the treatment and control groups participating in the study. The t method used was independent groups with equal variances (Ferguson, 1971).

Table 2

Summary t-Tests of Differences Between  
Treatment and Control Groups:  
Four Demographic Variables

Variable	Means		t	p
	Treatment	Control		
Education	10.80	10.58	0.80	NSD
Months on Assistance	21.26	27.09	0.60	NSD
Number of Children	1.79	1.63	0.56	NSD
Age	30.31	29.84	0.20	NSD

The average age across all groups was 30.05. The mean educational level for the combined groups was Grade 10. The average length of time on income assistance across the women

participating in this study was 30 months. The average number of children was 1.7. There was no significant difference between groups, on the demographic variables tested.

### Statistical Analysis of the Data

A Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to establish whether a relationship existed between the two dependent variables, self-regard and locus of control. Although the relationship is significant at the .05 level for pre-tests ( $p < .025$ ), the correlation coefficient is .315 indicating that substantially different variables are being measured. Table 3 contains the inter-correlations among IE and POI scores, for pre- and post-treatment administration in this study.

Table 3  
Pearson Correlation Among  
Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (I-E)  
and Personal Orientation Inventory (POI)

	Pre-Treatment		Post-Treatment	
	I-E	POI	I-E	POI
I-E Pre	$r = 1.00$	$r = .32^*$	$r = .44^*$	$r = .06$
POI Pre		$r = 1.00$	$r = .31^*$	$r = .36^*$
I-E Post			$r = 1.00$	$r = -.13$
POI Post				$r = 1.00$

\*  $p < .05$



An analysis of variance was calculated using the Biomedical Computer Program P-series, specifically, "A General Mixed Model Analysis of Variance Equal Cell Sizes: P8V" (Jennrich and Sampson, 1979). This computational routine requires equal cell sizes; three cases were randomly eliminated from the groups to attain this condition.

### Hypothesis Testing

H<sub>1</sub> As a result of participation in C.O.P.E., women will become more internal in their locus of control, as measured by Rotter's Internal External Locus of Control Scale (Rotter, 1966) when compared to a control group.

In order to determine the significance of differential group changes, repeated measures ANOVA was applied to the Internal-External Locus of Control scores. Table 4 gives a summary of results of this analysis.

Table 4

Repeated Measures ANOVA Across Two Groups for  
the I-E Scale at Pre- and Post-Test Time

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F
Subjects				
Treatment	22.12	1	22.12	1.44
Subjects (Within Treatment)	551.58	36	15.32	
Within Subjects				
Time	52.22	1	52.22	8.35*
Treatment x Time	0.01	1	.01	.00
Subjects x Time (Within Treatment)	225.26	36	6.26	

\*p < .05

The repeated measures ANOVA show no significant difference between groups ( $F = 1.44$ ). A significant main effect of time was shown ( $F = 8.35$ ), however, the treatment-by-time interaction was not significant ( $F = .00$ ). Decreases in externality of locus of scores control for the treatment group were not significantly greater than those of the control group.

H2 As a result of participation in C.O.P.E, women will have a greater degree of self-regard as measured by the Self-Regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory (Shostrom, 1963) when compared to a control group.

In order to determine the significance of differentiated group changes, repeated measures ANOVA was applied to the Self-Regard scores. The data presented in Table 5 shows the F

values for the pre- and post-tests between groups. There was no significant difference between groups ( $F = .34$ ). A significant ( $F = 63.82$ ) main effect of time was shown. As well, a significant treatment-by-time interaction was established ( $F = 20.23$ ).

Table 5

Repeated Measures ANOVA Across Two Groups for Self-Regard  
at Pre- and Post-Test Time

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F
Between Subjects				
Treatment	2.96	1	2.96	.34
Subjects (Within Treatment)	309.53	36	8.50	
Within Subjects				
Time	186.33	1	186.33	63.82*
Treatment x Time	59.07	1	59.07	20.23*
Subjects x Time (Within Treatment)	105.10	36	2.89	

\* $p < .05$

Since two treatment groups and two control groups were used in study, another analysis was conducted to compare the effects of the treatment in separate implementation to the two independent control groups. Three subjects were randomly eliminated to create equal cell sizes for the analysis. The  $F$  values did not reach significance in either case -- groups-within-treatment condition or groups-by-time interaction. Table 6 outlines the results. Therefore, treatment effects are generalizable to both implementations.

Table 6

Repeated Measures ANOVA Across Four Groups  
for Self-Regard at Pre- and Post-Test Time

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F
Between Subjects				
Treatment	1.39	1	1.39	.16
Groups	21.78	2	10.89	1.23
(Within Treatment)				
Subjects	282.78	32	8.84	
(Within Treatment)				
Within Subjects				
Time	186.89	1	186.89	64.77*
Treatment x Time	64.22	1	64.22	22.26*
Groups x Time	4.56	2	2.78	.79
Subjects-Time	92.33	32	2.89	
(Within Treatment)				

\*p < .05

Since Self-Regard reached significant levels, and a interaction effect occurred, a simple effects test (Winer, 1962) was carried out to establish differences in means between treatment and control groups at pre-treatment and post-treatment time. A representation of the mean scores at pre- and post-treatment times is indicated in Figure 1.

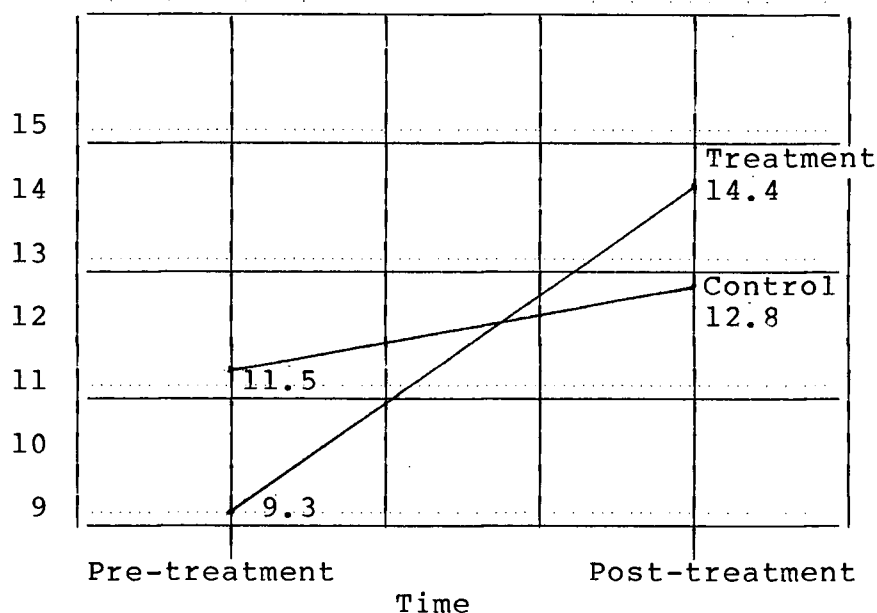


Figure 1. Mean scores for pre- and post-treatments measured over time.

Results of the simple effects test (Table 7) indicate a significant difference ( $F = 4.78$ ) between the means of the treatment and control group at pre-treatment and none at post-treatment time ( $F = 2.64$ ).

Table 7

ANOVA For Simple Main Effects for Self-Regard

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F
Time 1 Treatment	42.25	1	42.2500	4.78*
Time 2 Treatment	23.37	1	23.3700	2.64
Subjects (Within Treatment)	282.78	32	8.8368	

\* $p < .05$

## Interviews

Interviews were carried out to assess the goals of the participants, goals of the referring agent, and goals of the instructor and to get some indication of whether these goals were being met. The purpose of the class from an instructor's perspective as well from the referring agent's perspective is two-fold. The first is esteem building; the second, clear planning for retraining, re-education, re-entry into the labour market, or a return to home with an improved sense of personal control.

The participants have similar goals. An analysis of the interview material indicates that in nineteen interviews used, there were seventeen initial statements of requests for self-esteem or confidence building. Other goal statements included thirteen statements of need for educational planning and information; ten statements of need for communication skills or assertiveness training; eight statements describing a need for job information and increased ability to get a job. Seven requests were made for increased awareness. Six requests were made for both child care and parenting skills and information, and the ability to get off welfare at the end of C.O.P.E. Other goal statements included being able to overcome a fear of people and the "world", to get information and set goals, to gain friends, to help others, to improve life, to stop putting oneself down, to be able to complete the C.O.P.E. course, to gain group support, to work on relationships with men, to learn stress management, and to learn relaxation techniques. Some goal

statements are very specific; others are vague. All are within the limits of the course.

At the end of the course, each woman described the goals that had been met for her during the course. None of the women had access to her original statements. A breakdown by individual subject is available in Appendix C, however, a description of results is reported at this point from a group perspective. At post-interview time, each C.O.P.E. graduate presented a very specific and clear description of educational and career plans as opposed to very general, or in some cases, very different initial statement of career plans. The women that addressed the confidence/self-esteem issue at the post-test interview, described themselves as greatly changed in respect to their self-esteem; most addressed the issue in specific terms describing improved assertiveness skills. At the post-interview, assertiveness and communication skills were listed thirteen times as a successful experience; improved parenting was mentioned ten times; career planning five times; group support was noted four times, as was self-esteem and confidence. Improved community and personal awareness were each mentioned three times as successful experiences. Reduced fear was described three times. Other indications of success were being able to speak up, having new friendships, the feeling of competence, being able to stand up for oneself, having self-awareness, study skills, having feelings of being in control, improved relationships, and improved life skills.

At the post-interview, participants were also asked to rate

individual factors to which their successful and unsuccessful experiences were attributed. These factors were good luck, hard work, easy course, your intelligence, effort, instruction, mood, and "other", for "success" and bad luck, lack of hard work, hard course, not smart enough, little effort, instruction, mood, and "other", for "unsuccessful" experiences. For successful experiences the highest mean score and most important attribution for participants was the instruction ( $\bar{X} = 4.74$ ); the following two were hard work and effort ( $\bar{X} = 4.37$  and  $\bar{X} = 4.37$ ), and intelligence ( $\bar{X} = 4.10$ ). The lowest score was luck. For failure experiences, several people chose not to complete the questionnaire, indicating verbally that they had no unsuccessful experiences. For those who did answer, the factor to which lack of success is most consistently attributed within the group is mood during the class ( $\bar{X} 2.27$ ); the next is "hard course" ( $\bar{X} 2.13$ ); the next is little effort ( $\bar{X} 1.87$ ). In both cases, "other" was not included in the analysis. (Appendix B includes a copy of the pre- and post-test interview schedule.)



## CHAPTER FIVE

### Summary, Conclusions and Discussion

#### Summary

This study used a pre- and post-test design with a treatment condition and a control condition which was repeated three months later. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of skill building on a specific population as measured by locus of control and self-regard. Treatment subjects were screened before assignment on an otherwise first come, first served basis to the C.O.P.E. program. The program ran from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., five days a week for 12 weeks. Subjects participating in the study were thirty-nine single parent mothers on income assistance who wanted a career readiness course before retraining or returning to the workplace. Twenty women were in the treatment condition and nineteen were in the control; (however, for some analyses, one or three subjects were randomly removed to create equal cell sizes.) Interviews were carried out to assess the goals of the program for the referral source, the instructor and the participants. Participants were interviewed at post-test time to find if they felt successful and to what they attributed their success and failure. The literature reviewed for this study suggested that a program which taught communication skills, decision-making, and goal-setting, would improve the locus of control of participants and would improve self-esteem of

participants.

The locus of control construct was discussed as an attitudinal variable measuring individually perceived control over events. An internally oriented person would be more goal directed than an externally oriented person. The research hypothesized that a C.O.P.E. program would promote measured change in a treatment group when compared to a similar group, not currently taking the class.

In order to determine the significance of mean changes across treatments and time for locus of control, an ANOVA was computed. No initial differences were indicated between groups being tested in this analysis. There was, however, a significant movement over time for combined treatment and control groups. There was no interaction effect to indicate that the treatment affected movement toward a more internal locus of control when compared to the control group.

The self-regard construct was discussed as a variable which would measure the degree to which a person liked herself because of her strengths. A woman high in the self-esteem variable would feel more confident and describe herself in more positive terms. It was hypothesized that the C.O.P.E. program would significantly improve the self-esteem of a treatment group when compared to a similar group not currently taking the program.

An ANOVA was computed to determine the significance of mean changes across time and treatments. As part of that analysis it was determined that there were no differences between groups during testing times.

The self-regard scale showed a significant change for the groups over time and an interaction effect was established indicating a significant increase in self-esteem for the treatment group when compared to the control group.

Because two treatment and control groups were run at different times, the groups were separated to determine whether there were significant differences over time; none were found.

In addition, because of the interaction effect, a simple effects test was performed to establish whether there were differences between groups at pre-test time and/or post-test time. Significant differences were found indicating that the treatment group had significantly lower self-esteem scores than did the control group. There was no significant difference at post-test time.

Interviews were completed to indicate the verbalized homogeneity of goals among the referring agent, instructor and group members. This homogeneity of purpose was indicated during the interviews. Successful completion of the C.O.P.E. class was indicated by both clarity and specificity of goal statements and by verbal indications of skills which reinforced the self-esteem measure. As well, success was indicated by initial expectations as described in the first week of classes by participants as compared with personal indications of success at completion of the course.

## Discussion

This section relates findings from the present study to studies cited in Chapter Two.

### Locus of Control

Locus of control was measured by the Internal-External Locus of Control Scale which indicates the degree to which individuals perceive themselves to control events by personal behavior (Rotter, 1966).

The literature reviewed for this study indicates that economically and socially denigrated groups tend toward an external locus of control (Lefcourt and Ladwig, 1965; Rotter, 1966; Stephens and Delys, 1973; Seligman, 1975; Teski, et al, 1980). The women in this study are on income assistance; externally dependent upon transfer payments for their continued survival and may, therefore, based on assumption, have a more external locus of control. The women are, also, all single parent mothers; women who have experienced the dissolution of a relationship. Doherty (1983), in a longitudinal study, confirmed that during a divorce, perception of control moves toward an external locus. However, he found that with successful experiences, over time this perception became more internal. Skills building affects perception of control. Studies indicate that specific skill development changes perception of control toward a more internal direction. This perception of control is, in turn, related to goal directed behaviour (Hersch and Scheibe,

1967). The program that is the focus of this research has two main objectives: Improvement of the perception of control of women in the program is one objective which is stated in terms of empowerment for each woman; the other is increased self-esteem.

The sense of personal power or personal control will enable effective, realistic choice making to occur; the women will set goals that are personally meaningful and useful for career directions.

The results of this study indicate that the women in both the treatment and control groups moved toward internality during the time the C.O.P.E. program was tested; however, the treatment did not affect group performance when compared with the control group. Several reasons are possible:

1. Because of the selection bias operating within the study, the women participating in it may have effectively screened themselves to include only women who were actively seeking experiences and skills which would affect their perception of personal control over events.
2. The community referral base to which control participants were sent may have used experiences which enhanced perception of personal control to the same extent that the C.O.P.E. program did.
3. Making a decision to go through a training program may, in itself, have affected the locus of control variable sufficiently over time for this particular group of women so that it affected the scores of the control groups.
4. A change in the economic conditions in the environment may

have affected the perception of control in either group.

Skills building within the C.O.P.E. class has not affected locus of control at significant levels when compared to a control group, however, significant changes were made in perception of control of C.O.P.E. participation as well as control group participants.

The other goal of the program is a sense of increased self-esteem.

### Self-Regard

In this study self-regard was measured by the self-regard subscale of the Personal Orientation Inventory. The theory on which the inventory was in part constructed indicates that lower order needs, both physiological and psychological, must be met in order for growth needs to be pursued and that thwarting of this development leads to sickness (Maslow, 1968).

Self-Regard is defined in this study as liking oneself because of one's strengths (Shostrom, 1974). The main goal of this program as described by participants, the leaders and the referring agent is to build self-confidence: self-esteem building as a function of the ability to affect personal and environmental change.

Skills building affects this variable (Foulds and Hannigan, 1976; Ware and Barr, 1977) and this variable, in turn, is affected by one's locus of personal control (Rotter, 1966; Fitch, 1970; Wall, 1970; Wareheim and Foulds, 1971).

The participants in the C.O.P.E. program appear to have moved

toward a sense of positive self-regard at a rate significantly greater than those women who did not participate in the treatment. It seems possible to conclude that single parent women on income assistance who participate in C.O.P.E. develop a sense of positive self-regard significantly greater than those women who do not participate in such a class. Since two groups were examined independently, some generalizability is possible; however, the results of simple main effects test indicate that there was a significant difference between the means of participants at pre-test time and no significant difference at post-test time (Winer, 1966). Several explanations of these results are possible:

1. Screening by the instructor on this variable was effective: The instructor was able to select those women more in need of the skills taught in this class than others.
2. Women in the control group were able to find resources to meet their esteem needs to some extent during the time in which the C.O.P.E. program was run.

The interview process added information to that revealed in the testing process. The results of the interview process focused on three main factors supporting feelings of success within the C.O.P.E. program. One factor was an external source (the instructor), the other factors were internal: effort and ability. Effort is less useful when describing successful experiences, which become a predictor for future expectancies, than is ability (Mednick, 1979). Both, however, are internal factors. Using an external source for successful attribution is

less useful than using an internal source (Abramson et al, 1978). When describing failure, the greatest contributing factor for women in this study was mood, an internal, unstable, specific attribution; a useful attribution (Abramson et al, 1978). All of these criteria point to expectancies for success based on a somewhat useful attribution process (Mednick, 1979; Weiner et al, 1980). Although attributions for failure appear to be useful in that mood is an unstable internal factor, subject to change, attributions for success made by these participants are more ambiguous. That is, external sources as well as internal sources are given almost equal weight. Wong and Sproule (1984) describe this phenomenon as "bilocal".

As well, the interview process determined initial and final goal statements of these women. All women at the end of the classes had defined clear and concrete goals for retraining, work or further education.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

1. Further research might use a third control group; one made up of participants not currently willing to take a skills building class, yet having the same group characteristics as those in the C.O.P.E. This process would add information to about the measured change in women and their personal readiness for change.
2. Using randomization within groups would be helpful to determine whether findings are the result of selection or the result of the treatment.
3. Careful monitoring and coding of behavior change of the



attribution process would be a useful research project to more fully understand what factors facilitated change and what the process of change is as it relates to locus of control and attribution process.

4. A study that used a follow up design with the research would be useful to determine whether C.O.P.E. participants met their stated goals.

5. Further exploration of skills building to isolate and sort specific skills useful for this group would be helpful to determine which skills are most useful for increasing self-esteem.

6. A correlational study using single parent mothers on income assistance and single parent women who are working would be interesting in order to determine differences between these populations in perception of control and self-esteem.

#### Implications of the Study and Program Recommendations

Single parent women on income assistance are socially and economically denigrated and skills building can promote movement towards goal-setting to change this situation in constructive ways. The outcome of this study supports the esteem building/self-confidence focus of the class. There is a significant change in measured esteem over time as compared with a control group. Because of the change in esteem it is recommended that the program continue and others like it be developed. The perception of personal control appears to happen independently of the groups' process and may be a function of self-selection for

this experience. That is, a time when movement toward an internal locus of control is occurring may be a time when people choose to become part of a group process which will promote striving toward esteem building experiences, goal-setting and planning. Because of the less clear results with locus of control, it is recommended that this focus be either strengthened or dropped with the C.O.P.E. program.

### Conclusion

The treatment and control samples used in this study have moved significantly toward an internal locus of control. The subjects interviewed have set goals to remove themselves from economic dependence, for most women have chosen to move, through a period of retraining, toward economic independence. At the conclusion of this study self-esteem for each woman was very high. They were able to verbalize their experience of themselves in positive terms and were able to describe their strengths publicly. Many women reported their self-assertion and communication skills as greatly improved. They described their successful completion of the "C.O.P.E." program as a combination of personal qualities and environmental supports (instructor's help). Their failures are largely internalized as unstable, changeable attributes. These women are willing to risk changing their current environment; their present level of security to find a more personally satisfying life style. The social structure, from their present perception, is such that they are personally able to control the outcome of events to make those changes. They are moving toward

growth experiences.

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APPENDIX A

Theoretical Framework of  
Career Opportunities in  
Preparation for Employment

C.O.P.E.

(Coming out Prepared for Equality)

Prepared by Linda Breault, Coordinator

LEAVES 73-79 NOT FILMED; PERMISSION  
NOT OBTAINED.

APPENDIX A  
Theoretical Framework  
of  
Career Opportunities in  
Preparation for Employment  
C.O.P.E  
(Coming out Prepared for Equality)

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## APPENDIX A

C.O.P.E.PURPOSE:

C.O.P.E was developed to offer single parent women on income assistance the confidence, information and skills to make decisions about their futures and more specifically, to explore ways of becoming economically independent.

INTRODUCTION:

The "average Canadian family" - working father, mother at home and 2.2 children - is becoming a myth. Over 10 per cent of all Canadian families are single parent families, 90 per cent of which are headed by mothers.<sup>1</sup>

If you are a single parent woman in Canada your chances of living below the Statistics Canada poverty line are two in three. Almost one half <sup>2</sup> of all women who head families are on some form of welfare.

In Kamloops this situation is as bad if not worse than in other communities across Canada (local statistics are not available at time of printing).

The woman on income assistance is faced with individual and societal barriers which keep her from becoming economically independent.

Margaret Daly in "To See Ourselves": Information Canada, 1975, sums up the situation of female single parent when she speaks of "lives that have been shaped not by any choices or decisions they have made, but by larger forces - forces of society that have crushed and moulded them into a lifestyle<sup>3</sup> of poverty, of 'disadvantage', because they are women".

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1. "One in A World of Two's", National Council of Welfare - Ottawa, 1976, page 4.
  2. "One in A World of Two's", National Council of Welfare - Ottawa, 1976, page 1.
  3. "The Disadvantaged Woman", To See Ourselves - Ottawa, Information Canada, page 103, 1975.

Most women in our society are traditionally brought up to be the at-home mother, which perpetuates the "average Canadian family" myth. The traits which women are encouraged to develop focus on interpersonal success, as mother, as wife. A woman's role is to be selfless, nurturing, supportive. She learns to be the stereotypic female: submissive, conforming, dependent. Women learn to like themselves only if they are liked by others; they learn not to define themselves but to be defined by others.

When marriage fails, one of the bases for women's self-esteem and identity is taken from them and a sense of failure results.

Our socialization processes often do not prepare women to become financially self-sufficient and independent. Poorly equipped to enter the work force, faced with inadequate or no child maintenance payments, 41.5 per cent<sup>4</sup> of single parents, women have no choice but to apply for welfare.

To be on welfare carries a stigma of being less worthwhile than others. Such a stigma aggravates the already low levels of self-confidence felt by women and makes it even more difficult for them to decide to re-enter the work force or to retrain.

Faced with having to find employment or take further training, the single parent woman is often overwhelmed with guilt and fear about becoming an inadequate parent. As a wife she has only her role of mother left to validate her sense of self-worth. Societal attitudes, although changing, continue to perpetuate the myth that working mothers are inadequate mothers. These attitudes confront all working mothers, but they are felt most deeply by the woman, who must parent alone. Thus, she feels paralysed by the conflict of wanting to work and also to parent well.

The woman on income assistance often finds herself isolated and lonely. Not knowing how to develop a support system for herself, coupled with the lack of understanding from others, she feels defeated, confused and alone.

C.O.P.E. was developed to help single parent women break through these individual and societal barriers. The program has a four-fold purpose:

1. To provide a support system of women helping women to break through their sense of hopelessness and isolation.
2. To develop self-confidence and self-worth to enable these women to set goals.

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4. Statistics Canada - Survey of Consumer Finances - 1974.

3. To inform women of choices available to them for educational upgrading, retraining or work-force entry.
4. To assist women to overcome specific problems which hinder them from becoming economically independent: Parenting, communication skills, assertiveness training, access to community and social agencies.

#### OUTLINE:

The 12-week program runs from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., daily. Short classroom time eases the transition from home to school and prevents the need for after-school child care. The women are encouraged to use noon hours to swim or do other physical activity, shop at thrift shops or look after home maintenance details.

The classroom is off-campus and is centrally located to bus routes, the Community Y and the downtown core.

#### INTAKE:

The total referral and acceptance process demands a good working relationships with the Rehabilitation Unit of M.H.R. Financial Assistance Workers in the district offices refer potential participants to the F.A. Worker at the Rehabilitation Unit. There, the women are interviewed and then referred to the C.O.P.E. instructor who sets up individual interviews.

This screening process is essential for the instructor to assess individual needs and to allow the women to verbalize their problem areas. Once a decision is made, the F.A. Worker and Rehabilitation Officer are informed and registration procedures begin. The interview is held at least two weeks prior to course commencement so the women can make good child care arrangements. During the waiting period they also meet with their Rehab. Officer to arrange training allowance and discuss their commitment to the program.

#### DEVELOPMENTAL PHASES

The C.O.P.E. program is essentially in three phases, each phase reinforcing the other two to provide self-confidence, awareness and the skills required for goal setting and decision making.

### Peliminary Phase

This time involves learning basic communication skills and developing greater self-awareness and confidence. Using a cooperative, problem solving model, the participants learn to help each other and give mutual support. The process is an empowering one which allows each woman to begin to acknowledge her strengths and ability and begin to see that she has choices and can act upon them.

Specific workshops and units are built into the format to encourage personal growth and to deal with specific problems the participants are encountering.

### Parenting

The success or failure of the women moving to economic independence is often determined by their family and its ability to cope with mother's changing role. The women often suffer from guilt, uncertainty and frustration when they don't understand their own rights and responsibilities and their lack of basic parenting skills.

Each group has different emphasis on the amount of time spent in this area. The approach used is basically an Adlerian model emphasizing self-acceptance, logical consequences and rights and responsibilities.

Referrals are often made to Special Services, Mental Health or M.H.R. Family Support Workers or Social Workers for situations which require professional help beyond the scope of the program.

### Stress Reduction

The participants are exposed to a variety of techniques to enable them to deal more effectively with their lives and deal with anxiety and stress: visualization, relaxation techniques, time management, massage and two fitness classes per week are included along with noon hour water aerobics.

### Assertiveness

The women learn assertiveness skills in order to be able to listen fairly to the needs of their family and to communicate clearly their own needs and changing roles. Besides being able to communicate with the family the women also require assertiveness skills to clearly state their messages to friends and individuals with whom they must deal as they begin to take control of their lives. A variety of techniques are used to break old patterns of passivity, manipulation and aggression.



## Social Awareness

Social roles and attitudes with regard to women are changing. Work and education patterns, family roles, sexuality, non-traditional employment, concepts of femininity and appropriate female behaviors are discussed and explored.

Many of the women, having lived in isolation, are often unaware of community resources. An awareness of social agencies, provincial government agencies and community resources is developed. Speakers from these areas are often invited depending upon the group's needs.

## Phase Two - Goal Setting

All of the participants who enter the program are aware that they want to change, however, these women don't know what to do or how to do it. Changes in self-image which occur during the course allow for greater freedom of choice and more decisiveness.

The participants are encouraged to dream, brainstorm and think creatively about possible choices. Holland's Code and the Self-Directed Search and the Job Hunting Guide are used as further tools. They then narrow the alternatives according to personal values and priorities, limits and abilities. Because of their financial restrictions it is necessary to explore immediate options as well as life-time careers. They then base their employment choices upon employment possibilities available in twelve months or less. Those with marketable skills explore ways of gaining further skills through in-service, extension courses and training.

It is important to recognize that women not only make career choices but also life-style choices. They need to explore extensively to make realistic decisions about goals and options. Most think only of traditional female jobs without really examining whether the choice is based on role familiarity or personal preference.

Exposure to career choice is limited to opportunities available in the Kamloops area since most of the women do not want to relocate.

Career information is provided in a variety of ways:

- Discussion and reading of career materials
- Class visits by Canada Employment Counsellor
- Class visits by Cariboo College Counsellor
- Individual research
- Individual interviews with College Counsellors
- Familiarization with on-the-job training plans

Once the women have narrowed their choices they select a field placement for one week. This work exposure often includes sitting in on classes if they plan to attend college. These experiences are helpful in clarifying goals and confirming career choices.

At this time the women are encouraged to meet with their Rehab. Officer to discuss with her/him some of the options they are exploring.

Once the women have an idea of their goals they are required to develop individual career plans and a resume.

The majority of C.O.P.E. participants are women who quit school early and are under-educated and untrained. Most require training and/or upgrading. Throughout the course there is a heavy emphasis on academic and study skill upgrading and reading. Participants are encouraged to write the G.E.D. if their Able Placement Test results indicate probable success. Referrals are made to other college personnel for testing and consultation on an individual basis.

Tours of the College and Library are included in the course.

### Phase Three - Action Plan

The final stage is that of action. Each participant completes a personal action plan to help her to feel confident to deal assertively with problems which will arise. Emphasis is placed on realistically looking ahead to the difficulties she is likely to meet and to give thought and preparation to overcoming them.

By the end of the week, the first steps should ideally be underway so that a momentum will take over in the vacuum left by completing the course. The women are encouraged to continue their support system. Most of the former participants keep in touch to let me know what they are doing.

Upon leaving C.O.P.E. the women then work with their Rehab. Officer to make necessary financial arrangements for further training or to take the M.H.R. Job Action Program for help in gaining employment and further vocational guidance.

My hope as the facilitator of C.O.P.E. is that I have helped women to make changes, but left them free to decide how and what to change. Each of my groups have provided me with a rewarding and enriching experience as I see women leaving with the skills to cope with future decisions, the conviction to act on them and confidence to follow through on the best decision available.

## APPENDIX B

Pre-Group Interview Schedule

1. What do you expect from yourself in C.O.P.E.?  
PROBE: Anything more?
2. Generally, how would you describe your feelings about yourself as you are starting C.O.P.E.?  
  
PROBE: Would you give me some situations to which I can relate this?
3. To what or whom do you attribute these feelings? (Where do they come from?) (What is the cause?)  
PROBE: Can you give me some examples?
4. What do you value about yourself?  
PROBE: What are the most important things?
5. How did you come to be . . . . . (value from preceeding question)?
6. What ambitions do you have for yourself? Goals?
7. If you were to fail, what would be the cause?
8. If you were to succeed, to what or whom would you attribute the cause?
9. How important is it to you to know you are responsible for your successes?
10. How important is it to you to know you are responsible or your failures?
11. To what would you attribute your success at C.O.P.E. (meeting the expectations set in Question 1)?

IF CLIENT NEEDED CUES, THE FOLLOWING LIST WAS OFFERED:

Good luck  
 Good or poor guest speakers,  
 Breault or the program  
 Ministry of Human Resources  
 Your intelligence  
 Your hard work  
 Health  
 Effort

Post-Group Interview Schedule

1. What are your immediate goals or plans?
2. a) What are some successful experiences you've had at C.O.P.E.?  
b) What are the reasons?
3. a) What are some unsuccessful experiences at C.O.P.E.?  
b) What are the reasons?
4. What are some additional reasons for your successful experiences at C.O.P.E.?

	<u>NOT TRUE</u>			<u>VERY TRUE</u>	
a) Good Luck	1	2	3	4	5
b) Hard work	1	2	3	4	5
c) Easy course	1	2	3	4	5
d) Your intelligence	1	2	3	4	5
e) Effort	1	2	3	4	5
f) Linda Breault's instruction	1	2	3	4	5
g) Mood during C.O.P.E.	1	2	3	4	5
h) Others/group support	1	2	3	4	5

5. What are some additional reasons for your unsuccessful experiences at C.O.P.E.?

	<u>NOT TRUE</u>			<u>VERY TRUE</u>	
a) Bad luck	1	2	3	4	5
b) Lack of work	1	2	3	4	5
c) Hard course	1	2	3	4	5
d) Not smart enough	1	2	3	4	5
e) Little effort	1	2	3	4	5
f) Linda Breault's instruction	1	2	3	4	5
g) Mood during class	1	2	3	4	5
h) Others	1	2	3	4	5

6. What do you think of these questions?

## APPENDIX C

Interviews Pre and Post: Goal Statements

## Subject One:

Wanted improved communication skills, increased self-awareness and lessened fear of people. She also wanted information. At the concluding interview she described her assertion skills and her ability to speak up, using them. She also talked about the Open Learning Institute and its correspondence courses as a means of completing a degree.

## Subject Two:

Wanted an educational direction, a chance to make friends and be of help. She also described a need for assertion skills. At the concluding interview she described her assertive abilities, her new found friends and three job prospects.

## Subject Three:

Wanted to increase her confidence in order to find a job. She also wanted to help with decision making skills and information. She felt a need for assertion techniques and for child care information. At the post interview she described plans for upgrading and education and a sense of success at getting a clear direction.

## Subject Four:

Wanted to get off welfare. She wanted increased awareness and personal information. At the final interview this subject described a sense that she could now do things and she had a clearly developed set of plans.

Subject Five was randomly eliminated from the study.

## Subject Six:

Wanted an increased sense of confidence, communication skills, assertion skills, and parenting skills. She also wanted to articulate goals. At the final interview this client described career planning and parenting skills as being successful, in fact, "Great" and communication skills as somewhat less successful. She had clearly articulated goals and steps to take to reach them.

**Subject Seven:**

Described a need for personal awareness, more self-assurance, confidence and the ability to stop putting herself down. She also wanted to be able to find a job. At the final interview this client had a clearly described educational goal, was able to stand up for herself and felt that "she could do it".

**Subject Eight:**

Wanted to improve communication skills, parenting skills and assertion skills. She wanted increased self-esteem and self-confidence. She wanted to know about schooling. At the final interview she described increased self-awareness and improved communication skills, she talked about improved study skills and a specific educational program she would take. She also described volunteer work with which she was involved.

**Subject Nine:**

Described a goal as being able to finish the C.O.P.E. program. Other goals were to keep from avoiding the world, to find a job; to get more knowledge. At the final interview she was moving into town to be more accessible and to be able to get a job. She valued her ability to speak up and communicate.

**Subject Ten:**

Wanted some outside contact, some work or educational goals and parenting skills. At the end of the program she described her parenting skills as having improved, her personal awareness as being greater and her friendships as having increased. This client's goals for work/educational direction were left at this time and a decision was made to return to her marriage.

**Subject Eleven:**

Wanted to overcome personal fears and problems, improve her parenting skills and gain more confidence. She also described a need to get more in touch with the world. At the end of the course she described a lessening of her fear of authority, better parenting skills, better community awareness and communication skills and a feeling of being more in control.

**Subject Twelve:**

Wanted to find out more about herself; to learn different things, to get some education and to enter the work force. At the end of the program she described specific career goals. She also described herself as having found new resources and as having learned more about herself. She has clearly met her needs in the program.

**Subject Thirteen:**

Wanted to build her confidence and self-esteem. At the program's end she described a sense of increased confidence and esteem. She also described new self-assertion skills, improved parenting skills and clear career plans.

**Subject Fourteen:**

Wanted to meet new people and develop friendships. She also wanted to gain increased self-understanding and awareness and to develop a sense of direction for work. At the final interview this client described immediate volunteer plans and a career goal. She also discussed her improved parenting skills, self-assertion skills and improved self-esteem. As well she described the usefulness of the group support for her.

**Subject Fifteen:**

Wanted to build herself up; to improve her self-esteem. She wanted to get off income assistance and have some educational/career plans. At the final interview she described her next steps as doing a resume blitz and taking a job action course through the Ministry of Human Resources. She described her success with communication skills, her improved self-assertion and parenting skills and the usefulness of the group support.

**Subject Sixteen:**

Wanted improved self-confidence, increased independence and a direction for school or work. At the final interview she described clear and immediate career plans. She also talked about her success with assertion, self-esteem and confidence and with parenting, on the job placements and in her career choice.

**Subject Seventeen:**

Wanted to get off welfare and raise her children independently of welfare. She wanted to change herself, to learn to like herself; to feel less put down and scared. She wanted some independence. At the final interview she described her success in terms of assertion skills, parenting skills and career development. She had upgrading in progress and an application in for a specific training area.

**Subject Eighteen:**

Wanted to feel good about herself. She wanted to improve communication skills generally, and specifically in her dealings with men. She wanted to get over feeling isolated; to improve her confidence. She wanted to feel closer to her family. In terms of educational improvement she wanted to complete her high school and get some specific training. At the final interview she described her successes. Her fear was reduced through group support. She had improved communication skills which helped with her family life. Her parenting skills were improved. She described fitness classes and relaxation exercises as helping to reduce tension and improve self-expression. Her educational goals were specific and concrete.

**Subject Nineteen:**

Wanted confidence through assertiveness skills, group support, self-understanding, self-acceptance, stress management and relaxation. She had specific work goals in mind. At the final interview her work goals were still very specific but very different from her entry goals. She described various personal areas as successfully improved. Those areas included parenting, self-awareness, communication skills, assertion skills, self-esteem development and interpersonal relationships. Her confidence level was high.

**Subject Twenty:**

Wanted improved confidence, aggressiveness levels. She described herself as depressed and wanted to get off assistance and find work. She wanted to like herself. She wanted to improve her parenting skills. She had specific career and volunteer areas in mind. During the final interview it was immediately obvious that her career goals had changed. She described her parenting as successful. She described herself as having lost a sense of fear; of having increased social awareness and a desire for action. Life skills like assertion were improved, specifically her ability to deal with requests and criticism. She felt she had built good relationships in the class and had a strong support system.